



Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife
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Longnose Sucker

Catostomus catostomus

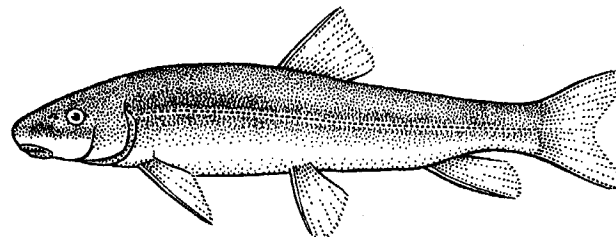
State Status: **Special Concern**

Federal Status: None

Description: Longnose Suckers are torpedo-shaped fish with a snout that extends beyond the subterminal mouth. They can reach a size of over 500 mm; however in New England they are generally smaller. They are generally silvery-gray to yellowish in color and sometimes have darker blotches or saddles along their sides. During breeding season they will have a red lateral stripe and tubercles (pimple-like bumps) on their head and fins.

Similar Species: Longnose Suckers and white suckers (*Catostomus commersoni*) can be easily confused. Longnose Suckers have finer scales than white sucker and have 85 lateral line scales, compared to the 75 for white sucker. The lateral line pores can sometimes be easily seen in the Longnose Sucker whereas in the white sucker the pores are not visible. In the Longnose Sucker, the lower lips look like two square flaps, whereas in the white sucker the lower lips are more tapered.

Habitat: In Massachusetts, Longnose Suckers are found mainly in cool upper sections of streams and rivers with rocky substrates. They are only found in the western part of the State, specifically in the Deerfield, Housatonic, Hoosic, and Westfield watersheds. In other parts of their range they are found in lakes and have been found as deep as 600 ft.

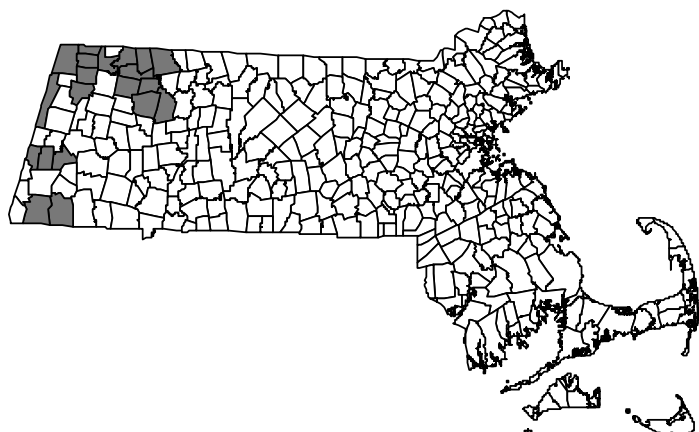


Drawing by Laszlo Meszoly, from Hartel et al. 2002.
Inland Fishes of Massachusetts.

Life History: Longnose Suckers reach maturity at around 5 to 7 years of age, or 130-400 mm in length. They can live up to 20 years and can spawn multiple times during their life. Upstream spawning migrations occur from mid-April through July. They may migrate many kilometers to reach spawning grounds. Their peak spawning activity is relatively short lasting between 5 and 10 days and only occurs during daylight hours. Spawning occurs in areas that have moderate to fast stream currents and gravel substrates. Longnose Suckers do not build nests but release adhesive, demersal (sinking) eggs and show no territoriality.

Young-of-the-year can be found in midwater feeding on plankton. Adult Longnose Suckers feed primarily on benthic invertebrates, specifically *Gammarus*, *Daphnia*, and Chironomidae, *Cladocera*, and algae. Longnose Suckers are vulnerable to predation during spawning by a variety of animals, such as northern pike, bears, other mammals, osprey, and eagles.

Threats: Habitat alteration is a major threat especially through erosion and sedimentation, flow alterations, and increased water temperatures. This species relies on clean gravel substrates that are well oxygenated to rear their eggs and all of these threats can severely decrease their reproductive success. In addition, dams can prevent their migration to preferred spawning habitats.



Distribution in Massachusetts
1977 - 2002

Based on records in Natural Heritage Database

Breeding Season

| Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
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Please allow the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program to continue to conserve the biodiversity of Massachusetts with a contribution for 'endangered wildlife conservation' on your state income tax form as these donations comprise a significant portion of our operating budget.

Updated April 2003